



## Life as a New Missionary During a Worldwide Pandemic

Here's a little update from my temporary home in Santiago, DR



Celebrating Palm Sunday.

The alter of our Palm Sunday Service.

### PALM SUNDAY

Palm Sunday looked a little bit different this year but the no less important. I celebrated with Pastor Krey (the Regional Director of LAC), his family, and Tirzah Krey (my roommate). We celebrated with a home service and a walk singing and waving palms branches in the street!



Alégrate mucho, hija de Sion; da voces de júbilo, hija de Jerusalén; he aquí tu rey vendrá a ti, justo y salvador, humilde, y cabalgando sobre un asno, sobre un pollino hijo de asna. Zacarías 9:9 (RVR)



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I have lived in the Dominican Republic for just about three months. Now would be have been the time to begin talking with leaders regarding my transition from orientation in the DR to beginning my appointed work in Puerto Rico (PR) depending on my improved Spanish. However, that is not the case anymore; I might be moving to PR much later than anticipated. The coronavirus has closed all the DR borders from air, sea and land. However, this means more time to practice Spanish and more time to spend with my missionary family in the DR. I know God has me here in the DR for a reason. *“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven” Ecclesiastes 3:1*

We are starting week 3 of "shelter in place" here in the DR. There is an island wide curfew the president declared originally from 8pm to 6am which has now been bumped up to start at 5 pm. Essential businesses are closing at 3:30 to accommodate, since authorities can and will arrest those out past the hour.

We praise God that our mission team here and around the region is safe and healthy. Our offices have closed, and we are all working from home which means comfy clothes all day!

My schedule looks similar to what it was before the sheltering in place. I am still in 17 hours of Spanish a week, however instead of working with my teachers in person, all of my classes are now on Zoom an online video chat service. I have also started observing English classes on Zoom to prepare for teaching classes when I move to PR. With the wonderful aspects of technology, I have been able to participate in English conversations with the students in PR and attend worship services at my church there as well.

The biggest blessing for me has been the friends and family I have here in the DR. We have been going on daily walks around our neighborhood. Seeing the other missionary families every day brings me great joy knowing we are all in this together.



Statue at the Botanical Garden in Santiago

**PLEASE PRAY FOR:**

- *The Puerto Rico team as they are still experience earthquakes.*
- *All working to keep us safe.*
- *Solutions and Improvements to the Pandemic*

**GIVE THANKS FOR:**

- *That I was able to call the Colmado (corner store) for the first time to get drinking water for our apartment*
- *For my Spanish teachers.*
- *Other missionaries and friends who are helping me navigate a new place.*

**PRAISE GOD FOR:**

- *All the work that he is doing during this uncertain time.*



Staying updated by watching the President of the DR, Danilo Medina, address the nation about COVID-19

# Encourage One Another

During this uncertain time, many things have changed or have been adapted to fit the new “norm.” For me this means sheltering in place, having all meetings and Spanish classes via Zoom, and only leaving my house for essential food and necessities. This is a time that can seem very lonely for some individuals. The mission field is no different, however I am blessed by the missionary team God has surrounded me with. We are physically distant but not socially distant with the help of technology. I have been able to stay in contact with my parents, friends, and missionaries around the region and in Puerto Rico. We are still meeting weekly for bible study and have ‘parties’ over Zoom. I miss the personal contact, but I am grateful that during this time

I am still connected. Friendship is truly one of the greatest gifts in life. In our friends we find trusted companions who know us and love us for who we are, no matter what. I am grateful for my missionary friends and family because they keep me ground during this otherwise unsettling time. My missionary friends have truly been an example of this verse in 1 Thessalonians. *“Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.”(5:11)*



Sunday Brunch prior to sheltering in place

*Please keep all our LCMS missionaries in your prayers as we each try to figure out what the future holds. This won't stop us from Sharing the Gospel, Planting Lutheran Churches and Showing Mercy! Praise the Lord! I continue to keep all of you in my prayers during this time and I appreciate your support and encouragement.*

- Ashley Lehr

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There are many opportunities to serve as short-term or GEO missionaries. Check out the current list and download an application at [lcms.org/service](https://www.lcms.org/service). Click on “Service Opportunities.”

You can support my work by giving online to [www.lcms.org/lehr](https://www.lcms.org/lehr) or

A check can be made payable to the **LCMS** with **Ashley Lehr** in the memo to:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod  
 P.O. Box 66861  
 St. Louis, MO 63166-6861

**Mission Central**

Adopt me as your missionary by visiting [missioncentral.us/Lehr/](https://missioncentral.us/Lehr/)

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